



Mothstorm

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

For the third time in a single year (1851, to be precise), Reeve's brave British hero, Art Mumby Esq., realises that 'the fate of our empire and solar system depended on me?'. It will come as small surprise to devotees of **Larklight** and **Starcross** to learn that young Art, his Mother, Father and his irritatingly prim sister Myrtle, prove more than equal to the task; especially as Myrtle's piratical beau Jack Havock and his motley crew aboard the old aether-ship *Sophronia* are also on hand. This series of adventures, in which Art and Company again chart a dangerous course through the galaxies of a parallel Victorian universe, continues to delight. The book is a pleasure to hold in the hand; cover, layout and typefaces are designed with loving invention. David Wyatt's illustrations expand the text through their wit and detail. The advertisements which decorate the endpapers, effusive and confident as a Victorian periodical, invite the keen-eyed reader to spot connections in the story. The language largely echoes tales of Empire and derring-do; though Mr Reeve occasionally diverts himself, and no doubt his adult readers, with the likes of references, embedded in a single sentence, to great balls of fire, a whole lot of shaking going on and shake, rattle and roll, all innocent of quotation marks. To ensure the immediacy of first-hand narrative when chance leads our heroes on different paths, Art is obliged to interleave his swashbuckling prose with more demure pages extracted from Myrtle's journal; stopping short, however, of approving the nauseating sentimentality of her thoughts about Jack. Footnotes complement the narrative, allowing Art some manly writer-to-reader confidences.

This time, the adventure involves Giant Moths, the Tin Planet, shape-shifting, Ssilissa's long-lost relatives, merpeople dwelling in the soupy depths of the Uranian seas beneath floating fields of giant cabbages ? that sort of thing. The effervescent humour often derives from variations from Victorian history as we thought we knew it. The finale, for example, features an all-out assault by the Mothmaker on Balmoral Castle in the Christmas season, where an unamused Queen Victoria, deposited on top of the festive tree, almost sabotages her rescuers' attempts by crying out, 'Oh, well done! Huzzah! Go it, noble paragon of British boyhood!'

Running Order:

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